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ON TAP

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WATER AND WASTEWATER SYSTEM OPERATIONS

Trabuco Canyon Water District is a multi-function special district. The District:

- 1) owns and operates its own water treatment plant and wells,
- 2) owns and operates its own potable (drinking) water system,
- 3) owns and operates a sewage collection system,
- 4) owns and operates a wastewater treatment facility
- 5) owns and operates a reclaimed water system, and
- 6) owns and operates a recycled water recovery system.

While the number of customers the District has may be less than neighboring districts, the geographic area served by TCWD is rather large and comprised of a challenging terrain. All things considered, the District has a very complex operation. Two critical components are vital to the operation of the District.

First is the enormous infrastructure: the treatment plants, pumping stations, sewage lift stations, and pipes in the ground for both water and sewer.

The second component is the highly trained personnel of the District. The State of California requires any individual who operates either a water system or sewer system to possess proper certification. This

certification is issued by the State after these individuals obtained required educational course work, pass required tests, and earn required "in service" credit in the field.

In the water and wastewater industry, these individuals are referred to as "operators." In some sense, operators are to the water and wastewater industry much like teachers are to public education, or law enforcement officers are to law enforcement. They are required to have the proper certifications or credentials to do the work they do.

The level of certification that a water or wastewater operator must possess is very much dictated by the complexity of the system in which he or she works. Systems are rated by the State on a one to five scale based on their complexity; five is the most complex.

In the case of Trabuco Canyon Water District, the water distribution system is a Distribution Four System (D4), the water treatment system is a Treatment Three System (T3), and the sewage treatment system is a Wastewater Treatment Three System. This means all of the District's senior operators have certifications that meet or exceed these requirements. In many cases, the District employs operators who are cross trained and hold multiple certifications for each system (water and wastewater).

Equally important as the operators are the mechanics in the Maintenance Department.

The entire water and wastewater system is a complex design of pipes, pumps, motors, and electrical controls that need ongoing attention and care. The individuals in the Maintenance Department are specially trained in a number of fields and hold certifications specific to their field of training; again these certifications are a result of specialized instruction and successfully passing State required tests. In many cases in the District, maintenance personnel also hold certifications as operators.

It should be noted that all of the District's field personnel, both District operators and maintenance personnel, are required to be involved in continuing education to maintain their respective certifications. This involves "contact time" related to specific subject instruction, and in some instance re-testing.

The field personnel also have one additional qualification that is essential for employment with the District-the possession of a Class A driver's license. Due to the number of large heavy vehicles (Dump Truck, Vector Truck, and Slide Rail Bin Hauler), field personnel need to possess the proper license to drive and repair these vehicles. Earning a Class A license is highly encouraged by the District. The District is fortunate that 70% of its field personnel possess Class A licenses.

As if that weren't enough to ask of our field personnel, it is important to recognize that many of them are highly trained heavy equipment operators. The District uses various types of heavy equipment for major pipeline repairs and their expertise in this area is essential.

The District's field personnel manage to efficiently and effectively operate highly complex systems on a daily basis, seven days a week, with minimum interruption to customers. Their number one concern is maintaining the highest standards for public health and safety, while working safely.

So the next time you see a District truck, a white truck with the District's oak tree logo on the door, please remember this is a highly trained individual working on your behalf for the water and wastewater systems that service you.

The Regular Board Meeting is held on the third Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the District office located at 32003 Dove Canyon Drive, Trabuco Canyon. The public is encouraged to attend.

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

- ◇ November 21, 2007 – Adopted a Resolution establishing a policy regarding water and wastewater rate change proceedings.
- ◇ Approved the First Amendment to Site Lease for Omnipoint Communications, Inc.
- ◇ Received information relating to the Rose Canyon and Lang Wells Upgrades to Treatment Facilities.
- ◇ Approved change orders relating to the Dry Season Water Recovery Project
- ◇ Approved a change order relating to the Robinson Ranch Road Recycled Water Distribution System Expansion.
- ◇ Rejected the Compromise Proposal for the Municipal Water District of Orange County Municipal Services Review.

ON TAP is published and distributed by TCWD. We welcome your comments, suggestions and questions. Please call or write Sharon E. Smith, Editor

TCWD's *ON-TAP*

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